Abrams, J., Ferguson, J., Laud, L., (2001). Assessing ESOL students. *Educational Leadership*,

59(3) 62-65.

English for speakers of other languages, (ESOL) and special education teacher’s work together to address six questions that contribute to students learning problems. The teachers come up with a profile to help identify and explain possible learning disabilities in students.

The six questions addressed: 1: What have formal test found? 2: what is the student’s developmental history? 3: What are some psychological issues impeding progress? 4: What Educational experiences did the student have? 5: What are the student’s cultural experiences? And 6: Does the student show signs of a learning disability. The profile was done on students that attend the United Nations International School in New York City. The school is designed to teach the children of the individuals that wok at the United Nations; the school serves 1,400 students from 130 countries. 9 different students from different backgrounds were used as examples in this profile. (Adams, pg62).

Formal test have found is inadequate testing, creating a test with Basic English directions result in higher performance levels, better understanding of the language. Student’s developmental history showed there were no learning problems in the student’s native language, problems surfaced in the learning of the second language. To focus on the student’s developmental history they address students reading, writing, and speaking, learning disabilities in the parents were also addressed. Psychological issues such as abandonment, family issues. Once these issues were treated with counseling students were able to move forward with great progress. Prior Educational experiences learning English in the native country may affect the academic development, must first be fluent in the native language, speaking, writing, and reading. Mastering the native language helps in understanding the second language. Cultural experiences, providing positive cultural materials of the student’s native country, helps students become more receptive to peers and learning the second language is called cultural validation. (Adams pg 65). Signs of a learning disability, if an ESOL student shows sighs of a learning disability they will need individualized support. If ESOL students do not have a learning disability they will need more time to develop the language proficiency. (Adams pg65).

The Authors realized the answers to the six questions were as diverse as the students, Research showed if ESOL teachers and special education teachers work together as a team they can come up with a profile to better understand the students and provide assistance to the student’s specific needs. Not all of the students had a learning disability, when looking at the student more in depth it was found that all they needed was more instruction in learning and understanding the second language.

What I believe I took from this article is a better understanding of what it takes to be an educator. Being an educator is not just teaching the student and sending them home, it’s about being able to focus on so many other aspects of a student’s life. As a future ESOL teacher it gives me a lot of insight as to what to look for in a student. Many students that are second language learners may have other challenges they face.

It’s always important to look at the student’s background, family history, educational and psychological background as well. As an educator I personally want to be able to teach my students as well as to help them with any challenges they face. The article was helpful to clarify that most ESOL students may not have a learning disability; they just might need extra instruction in the second language.